

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. By the present amendment, claims 1, 2, and 25 have been amended. New claims 26 and 27 have been added. Claims 1-27 are pending in the application.

Regarding the objection to claims 16 and 17, claim 16 recites a passenger side A pillar, whereas claim 17 recites a driver side A pillar. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 16 and 17 are not duplicates and the objection to claims 16 and 17 should be withdrawn. Applicants note that this issue was addressed in the response to the previous Office Action of August 26, 2004.

As amended, claims 1 and 25 recite that the side panels of the windshield curtain each have a periphery shaped to follow the contour of the instrument panel. The shape of the peripheries do not depend on whether the curtain is inflated or whether an occupant of the vehicle is compressing the curtain against the instrument panel. The shapes of the panels themselves follow the contour.

This structure is not taught or suggested in Haland et al. (US 6,722,691 B1) or Henseler et al. (US 5,205,583). Haland et al. does not discuss the shape or configuration of any panels used to construct the air bag. As shown clearly in Haland et al., the air bag, when inflated, does not touch the instrument panel and has a contour that is curved opposite the instrument panel. (See Fig. 3 and column 6, lines 11-19). As the occupant moves into engagement with the air bag, the air

bag is compressed against the instrument panel. (See Fig. 5 and column 6, lines 20-38). Nothing in Haland et al. teaches or suggests side panels that have a periphery shaped to follow a contour of the instrument panel.

In Henseler et al., the side panels of the air bag also curve opposite the contour of the instrument panel. Also, Henseler et al. does not show the shape of the side panels prior to inflation, so there is no way to ascertain whether the peripheries of the side panels are shaped to follow the contour of the instrument panel. For example, the shape of the side panels in Henseler et al. could very likely be distorted due to the pressurization of the air bag.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that Haland et al. and Henseler et al. do not teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in claims 1 and 25. Therefore, the rejection of claims 1 and 25 should be withdrawn and claims 1 and 25 should be allowed. Claims 2-24 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific limitations recited therein.

Furthermore, regarding claim 25, neither Haland et al. nor Henseler et al. teach or suggest a windshield curtain that engages the windshield when inflated. In Henseler et al. the air bag clearly does not touch the windshield. In Haland et al., the air bag touches the windshield only when pressed into engagement by the occupant. Therefore, claim 25 is allowable for this further reason.

Claim 2 recites the that the peripheries of the side panels have a first part shaped to follow a surface of the

instrument panel presented generally toward an occupant of the vehicle and a second part shaped to follow an upper surface of the instrument panel presented toward the vehicle roof. This certainly is not taught or suggested in Haland et al. As set forth above, Haland et al. and Henseler et al. do not even teach or suggest side panels with a shape that follows a contour of the instrument panel, let alone respective portions that follow front and upper surfaces of the instrument panel. Therefore, claim 2 is allowable for these further reasons.

Claim 13 recites that the windshield curtain includes a first chamber inflatable along a front surface of the instrument panel presented generally toward the vehicle occupant and a second chamber inflatable along the windshield and an upper surface of the instrument panel adjacent the windshield. In Haland et al. the chambers do not have this configuration (see Fig. 4) and only conform to the instrument panel when compressed against the instrument panel by the occupant. Therefore, claim 13 is allowable for these further reasons.

Claim 15 recites that the side portions of the center panel have cutout portions that reduce the width of the center panel and helps form the tapered configuration of the windshield curtain. Neither Henseler et al. nor Haland et al. disclose a center panel with this configuration. Therefore, claim 15 is allowable for these further reasons.

Claim 20 recites that the side panels have a first portion and a second portion that extends transverse to the first portion. The first portions are shaped to extend along

a surface of an instrument panel presented generally toward the vehicle occupant when the windshield curtain is inflated. The second portions are shaped to extend along an upper surface of the instrument panel when the windshield curtain is inflated. As stated above, this is not taught or suggested in Henseler et al. or Haland et al. Therefore, claim 20 is allowable for these further reasons.

Claim 21 recites that the center panel has a width measured perpendicular to its length and the side portions of the center panel each have a cutout portion that reduces the width of the center panel and thereby helps taper a width of the windshield curtain. Neither Henseler et al. nor Haland et al. disclose a center panel with this configuration. Therefore, claim 21 is allowable for these further reasons.

New claim 26 recites peripheries of the first and second side panels shaped to help define first and second chambers of the windshield curtain when interconnected with the center panel. The first chamber is inflatable along a front surface of an instrument panel presented generally toward the vehicle occupant. The second chamber is inflatable along the windshield and an upper surface of the instrument panel adjacent the windshield. Neither Haland et al. nor Henseler et al. teach or suggest a windshield curtain with side panels shaped to help define chambers that follow the contour of the vehicle in this manner. Therefore, claim 26 should be allowed.

New claim 27 is claim 12 written in independent form and therefore is allowable as indicated in the Office Action.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,



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